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(71) Applicants (for all designated States except US):
ACHILLION PHARMACEUTICALS, INC. [US/US];
300 George Street, New Haven, CT 06511 (US). **SUN,
Yongnian** [CN/US]; 80 Howard Drive, Hamden, CT
06514 (US). **YANG, Wengang** [CN/US]; 114 Old Farms
Road, Cheshire, CT 06410 (US).

(72) Inventor; and

(75) Inventor/Applicant (for US only): **HUANG, Mingjun**
[US/US]; 11621 Greenlane Drive, Potomac, MD 20854-
3511 (US).

(74) Agent: **LECUYER, Karen, A.**; Cantor Colburn LLP, 55
Griffin Road South, Bloomfield, CT 06002 (US).

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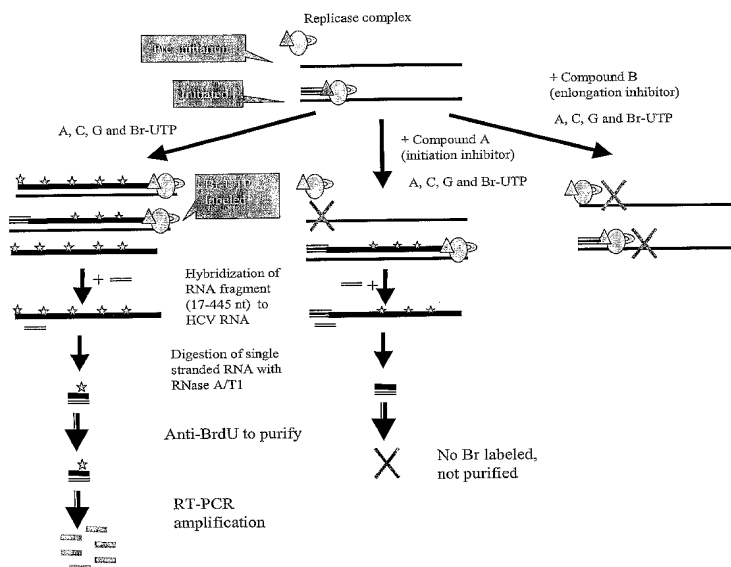
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(54) Title: QUANTITATIVE ASSAY FOR DETECTION OF NEWLY SYNTHESIZED RNA IN A CELL-FREE SYSTEM AND IDENTIFICATION OF RNA SYNTHESIS INHIBITORS



(57) Abstract: Methods for detecting populations of newly synthesized and newly initiated RNAs in a cell-free system are described. Suitable templates for the populations of newly synthesized and newly initiated RNAs are viral replicon RNAs, particularly HCV viral replicon RNA. The newly synthesized and newly initiated RNAs may be formed in the presence of a labeled nucleotide analog suitable for detection and/or quantitation of the RNAs. The assay may be employed to identify small molecule inhibitors of RNA synthesis of positive strand RNA viruses such as Hepatitis C Virus.

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